

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-9 and 12 have been rejected, with claims 10 and 11 objected to in the outstanding Official Action. Claims 7, 9 and 10 have been cancelled without prejudice and claims 1, 8, 11 and 12 amended. Therefore, claims 1-6, 8, 11 and 12 are the only claims remaining in this application.

The Examiner's indication of acceptance of the previously filed formal drawings is very much appreciated. Additionally, the Examiner's acknowledgment of Applicants' claim for foreign priority and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document is very much appreciated. Finally, the Examiner's indication of consideration of the prior art submitted with Applicants' Information Disclosure Statements is appreciated.

On page 5 of the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner indicates that claims 10 and 11 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if rewritten in independent form. The subject matter of claim 10 and claims 7 and 9 from which it depended has been incorporated in amended claim 1, as well as amended claim 12. Therefore, claims 1 and 12 are believed to contain allowable subject matter and are properly rewritten in independent form. The dependency of claims 8 and 11 has been changed to depend from claim 1. Inasmuch as claims 2-6 ultimately depended from claim 1 and claims 7, 9 and 10 have been cancelled, it is believed that all remaining claims contain the allowable subject matter referenced in the outstanding Official Action. Accordingly, allowance of claims 1-6, 8, 11 and 12 is respectfully requested.

Former claims 1-9 and 12 stand rejected under 35 USC §103 as unpatentable over Kammer (U.S. Patent 6,392,422) in view of Bilac (U.S. Patent 4,672,501). Inasmuch as

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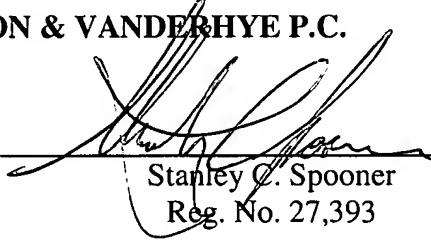
independent claims 1 and 12 have been amended to include the limitations of allowable claim 10, the rejection of these claims and claims dependent thereon is believed obviated by the above amendment.

Having responded to all objections and rejections set out in the outstanding Official Action, it is submitted that remaining claims 1-6, 8, 11 and 12 are in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is respectfully solicited. In the event the Examiner is of the opinion that a brief telephone or personal interview will facilitate allowance of one or more of the above claims, he is respectfully requested to contact Applicants' undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,

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